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Message Text

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PAGE 01 PHNOM 06839 161335Z

42
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CU-04 HEW-08 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 AID-20 ACDA-19 /166 W
---------- 043105
R 161220Z MAY 74
FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6131
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SAIGON
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
CINCPAC
COMUSSAG

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E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PINS, CB
SUBJECT: TEACHER/STUDENT ACTIVITY UPDATE

REF: PHNOM PENH 6784

1. MAY 16 HAS PASSED QUIETLY THUS FAR (1800 LOCAL TIME). GENDARMERIE NATIONALE FORCES TOOK DOWN ALL ANTI-GOVERNMENT BANNERS IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS, BUT BY AFTERNOON, NEW BANNERS WERE SPORTING THE SAME THEMES DESCRIBED IN REFTEL. THE GENDARMERIE APPARENTLY HAS DECIDED TO PERMIT THE NEW BANNERS TO REMAIN IN PLACE FOR THE TIME BEING, AT LEAST, ON THE SENSIBLE GROUNDS THAT THEIR REMOVAL FOR THE SECOND TIME WILL ONLY RESULT IN THE SLOGANS BEING PAINTED ON THE WALLS (THIS HAS ALREADY OCCURRED AT THE LYCEE 18 MARS).

2. TEACHING IS UNDERWAY AT NEAR NORMAL SCHEDULES IN MOST LYCEES. AT LYCEE 18 MARS, HOWEVER, ALMOST ALL THE TEACHERS STAYED AWAY DESPITE AN APPEAL FROM THE LYCEE STUDENTS'
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PAGE 02 PHNOM 06839 161335Z

ASSOCIATION THAT THEY RETURN TO WORK.

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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3. EDUCATION MINISTER KEO SANGKIM (FBIS D151440) AND PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET (FBIS D151713) IN SEPARATE MESSAGES BOTH DENIED THAT THE GKR INTENDS TO CLOSE SCHOOLS AND DRAFT STUDENTS, CHARACTERIZING SUCH RUMORS AS ENEMY PROPAGANDA. THE PRIME MINISTER APPEALED FOR CALM AND ORDER. THE EDUCATION MINISTER DEMANDED THAT CLASSES RESUME AND PROMISED PUNISHMENT UNDER APPROPRIATE LAWS FOR THOSE FOUND RESPONSIBLE FOR "PREVENTING OR INTERFERING IN THE FUNCTIONING OF CLASSES." HE ALSO NOTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE EFFORTS TO IMPROVE LIVING CONDITIONS OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES (TEACHERS ARE GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES), AND ASKED THE EMPLOYEES TO COOPERATE. THE MINISTER'S STATEMENT URGED SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS TO REPORT THE NAMES OF INDIVIDUALS CREATING DISTURBANCES IN THEIR SCHOOLS AND PROMISED FULL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT TO ALL EDUCATIONAL LEADERS.

4. COMMENT: TODAY'S INTERIM CALM SHOULD BE FOLLOWED BY RENEWED ACTIVITY TOMORROW WHEN TEACHERS HAVE PLEDGED TO WITHDRAW CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT AND SPECIFY WHAT FURTHER ACTION THEY INTEND TO TAKE. IN THIS REGARD, FANK C-IN-C SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ HAS JUST TOLD US THAT HE HAS RECEIVED INFORMATION THAT STUDENTS PLAN TO MARCH TOMORROW THROUGH THE CITY FROM THE LYCEE 18 MARS TO THE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY. WE HAVE ALSO SOME INDICATION THAT ANTI-GOVERNMENT MANIFESTATIONS MAY BE HELD IN THE PROVINCES IN SUPPORT OF STUDENT/TEACHER DEMONSTRATIONS IN PHNOM PENH.
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